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A NATIONAL BOARD OF ARBITRATION.

Since the recent labor troubles at Pullman and elsewhere, several bills have been introduced into the House of Representatives looking toward the establishment of a national board of arbitration for the settlement of difficulties arising between workmen and employers of labor. The recent troubles have been so acute and the disasters attending them so widespread that every friend of order and harmony must hope that we shall have no repetition of them and that, if there is any wise and practical means of preventing them, it may be adopted without delay.

There is no question that State boards of arbitration properly organized and composed of men of ability and fairness, and offering their services freely and promptly when differences arise, would be able to prevent a considerable number of strikes and to settle quickly many of those already having begun. This has been the history of the Massachusetts State Board, which has had a useful and honorable career in the work of conciliating and arbitrating labor disputes. Every State in the Union ought without delay to establish such a board. If the States would do this, they would find that such boards would pay for themselves many times over in the saving of property, besides preventing much of the friction and contention which attend all strikes and lockouts. That such boards will be needed during the next twenty-five years every one must see who has looked at all below the surface of the recent and earlier disorders. The demand for arbitration for these industrial disputes is now very strong if not universal. It is certainly the province of the States to provide that it may take place in the speediest and most impartial way. After disputes have arisen and grown bitter, it is much more difficult to get the parties to consent to go to arbitration than it would be if properly constituted boards existed beforehand. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, in this case as in others. It is really surprising that the States have been so slow to act in a matter of such great moment.

As to a national board of arbitration, it is not so easy to speak. Most of the questions connected with labor and capital evidently fall under the jurisdiction of the States, and the national Government ought not to overstep the limits of its authority. But so much of the trade of the country is now between State and State, that the national Government is certainly under obligation to see that this is carried on rightfully. Whatever questions therefore arise in connection with interstate commerce and with the business of the Government certainly should be looked after by the Government. There is a place, therefore, for a national board of arbitration and it is likely that such a board would command greater respect and be able to do more good in many cases than State boards.

The bills introduced into Congress during the month of July provide for a board for the arbitration of difficulties arising in connection with interstate commerce and of

those arising in the territories and the District of Columbia. They also provide, the Ikirt bill more particularly, that any labor difficulties, even when not affecting interstate commerce, may on the request of the parties concerned be arbitrated by the national board. In this way such a board could practically cover with its influence all differences of whatever kind needing arbitrating, without trespassing in any way on the prerogatives of the States.

Constituted on such a basis as this, it seems clear that a national board would be able to exert a wide and wholesome influence over the whole country, and we hope that Congress may act at an early date and let the experiment be tried. The Springer bill has already been favorably reported from the Committee on Labor.

THE PEACE CONGRESSES AND INTERPARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCES.

The Marquis Pandolfi has an interesting article in the July number of *La Conférence Interparlementaire* on the relation between the Peace Congresses and the Interparliamentary Conferences. Instead of growing wider apart as they seem to be doing, he thinks, since they are pursuing the same end, that under certain conceivable conditions they might be merged in one, and every sort of organization which believes in and advocates peace, whatever other objects it may seek to promote, might be allowed to send delegates to it. But these conditions not existing, he is of opinion that a union between the two organizations would injure the work of both. Mr. Pandolfi is a member of the Interparliamentary Union, but he speaks in terms of the highest appreciation of the mission and work of the general Peace Congresses which is to educate public opinion against war and in favor of peace, and to develop among the nations a deeper sense of justice and fairness. The purpose of the Parliamentary Union is more directly to influence legislation through its members in the different Parliaments.

We have no doubt that Mr. Pandolfi's position is correct, that the two bodies ought to remain separate. But the members of each of them ought to follow his example and treat with the utmost respect the mission and work of the other body. If this is not done, and there is some real danger that it will not be done, then the cause which they both seek to promote will be greatly hindered. The members of the Congresses have always appreciated the work of the Conferences, and are not likely to do otherwise, provided the members of the latter do not treat them as if their work in moulding public sentiment were of no practical value. We have heard it whispered that members of the Parliamentary Union have been heard to say that the work of the Congresses was all sentimental and valueless, and we are very glad that Mr. Pandolfi has pointed out to his colleagues that the mission of the Congresses is a very high and important one.